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# NARCISSUS
AND
# OTHER POEMS

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NARCISSUS

# Narcissus and Other Poems

By

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"The Book of Love," etc., etc.

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## *DEDICATION*

*YOU opened wide the windows of my soul,*
*And beauty entered like a sainted guest*
*All clad in choric splendour, with her breast*
*Speared in transcendent flame from some far goal.*
*Before me vistas of fair climes unroll,*
*Glory unknown, and calm, inviolate,*
*Pure wingéd joy, too sweet to contemplate,*
*And loveliness breathed from an unseen shoal.*

*Freed of all mortal chains, I walk alone*
*Like some pale dawn-star in the embered west,*
*By all the winds of heavenly harmony blown;*
*—For in that hour, above all others blest,*
*You brought me, as the voice of God that nears,*
*The commiserating ecstasy of tears.*

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# NARCISSUS

## NARCISSUS

GOLDEN as dawn he stands amidst the green,
Flecked with an amber shadow, and his eyes
Are amorous of some dream whose beauty lies
Beyond the stars in mythic paths unseen.

No reed of yellow corn is gold as he,
His naked body like old ivory . . .

Sweet brow to love unknown,—each veinéd wrist
Blue like an early violet 'neath the snow,
His lips more brilliant than the sun's first glow,
And lips that only virgin winds have kissed.

Some cloud-fay might have woven such symmetry,
A line of flowing color, throat to knee.

He pauses midmost in the wooded dell
Eager of every sinew, cheek alight
As of a million moonbeams in the night,—
His breath is like the bloom of asphodel.

What quest has sent him here this silent hour
When all the east is bursting into flower?

What thought perturbs the calmness of his face
  In that still moment's meditative light?—
  Some dreams that sends him shuddering and white
As dawn and darkness meet in soft embrace . . .

He walks as one enchanted beneath the trees,
Knowing not whither, yet his vision sees

Beyond, and ever beyond some phantom thing
  Toward which he wanders, groping in the air,
  With hands outstretched in passionate despair,
He follows evermore the summoning

Thro' wood he passes moving as a fawn
Like an incarnate spirit of the dawn.

O'er hill and emerald vale he comes at last
  Beside a silvery stream, whose banks are grown
  With myriads of blue iris overblown
And passion-flowers with all their splendor past.

The boughs above embower him from the sky—
He kneels, entranced, as if about to die . . .

Trembling with dream ineffable, his eyes
  Gaze downward in the water's emulous deep,

Where looking up, as if from starry sleep,
A lovely boy smiles amorous surprise.

Golden as dawn and shot with shimmering light,
His breast is as a lily in the night. . . .

He stoops possessed of sudden, keen desire,—
Those lips have been his quest for many years,
This throat whose loveliness would waken tears—
This girlish face mirrored with tender fire. . .

Shuddering with joy he bends to clasp his love,
While wooing-notes of robins float above.

Lips upon lips, and meeting breast to breast,
He lies face downward, cleaved at last, and whole,
Twain with his dream and silent soul to soul—
In sweet cessation of the ageless quest.

His sinuous body shivers with excess
Of love's intolerable loveliness. . . .

Consumed as if in some translucent cup,
Mouth merged with mouth in one ineffable kiss
He swoons with incommensurable bliss,
While swelling waters gently suck him up.

. . The sun veers in a diadem of rose,—
Deeply he drains a rapturous repose. . .

Drawn by the dream-lips of a golden boy,
  Lead by a vision to the brink of death,
  He sinks respiring beauty as a breath
Upon love's immemorial bier of joy.

# DIVINATIONS

## VOICES

VOICE of the wind,
Of the rollicking wind in the trees;
Voice of the leaves,
Of the sweet-singing boughs in the breeze;
Voice of the streams,
Of the silver tongued waves on the shore;
Voice of the shower,
Of the mirthful, May-visioned downpour;
Voice of the stars,
Of the lyre-tuned lights of the sky;
Voice of the flowers,
Of the blithe buds that know not a sigh;
Voice of the birds,
Of the nest-seeking spirits of light;
Voice of the dark,
Of the golden imperious night;
Voice of my soul,
Thou art wind, wave and shower,
Leaf, dark, and bower,
Bird, star and flower
One and inseparable whole!

## THE CUCKOO-CALL

THERE is peace in my heart to-night,
Because I have heard the cuckoo-call
Down by the windy shore where the gray mists fly!

There is peace in this moonless hour,
Because I have heard the voice of the Past
Chanting a tender requiem for my heart!

## BLUE NIGHT

BLUE night falls
About me in a mute caress
Of loveliness,
And the wind calls
In sudden minstrelsy
From every tree.
I want no more than this:
The wind's kiss
And the nightfall over me.

When silence sends
Its gentle lore,
And youth is o'er,
I want no more
Than, when life ends,
The quiet stars should weep
On my eternal sleep,
And there should be
The wind's kiss and the nightfall over me!

## THE MIRACLE

LET me be thankful for the flaming day,
The noon that burns to splendor, when I hear
The feet of Beauty passing on her way,
The voice of Beauty as she trembles near,
Sweet silvery wraith, my hope and my despair!
Man's path is but a pilgrimage of need
Seeking the ultimate star, the hidden lair,
And if he falters in his ruthless greed
Let him remember life, the miracle—
The rose of evening faint against the sky,
The slow moon's glory risen in the dell,
First love, and children's laughter floating by,
The sweep of sudden wind among the trees—
Let me be thankful, Lord, for all of these.

## INVOCATION TO NIGHT

O NIGHT, so still and calm and blue,
Why am I not a part of you?

O stars, serene in silent space,
Would I were clasped in your embrace.

O dark, so deep and mild and fair,
Enfold me in your ebon hair.

O night, so still and calm and blue,
Your peace alone is pure and true.

Rest upon earth I cannot find,
Tossed ever by the inconstant wind;

Nor is there shelter for my soul
That walks from misty shoal to shoal.

O night, so still and calm and blue,
I would I were a part of you!

## SONG OF FREEDOM

I WILL go out and forget love and be as a bird in the sky—
Free with the soaring breezes and the clouds that wander by;
(I will go out and forget love and be as a bird in the sky!)

I will go out in the wide lands, alone in endless space,
Where the earth is a-blaze with splendor, and I kneel in the sun's embrace;
(I will go out in the wide lands alone in endless space.)

I will go out and forget love as the wild wind in the sky,
And be as a bird without bourne or kin or aught to hold me by—
(I will go out and forget love as the wild wind in the sky!)

## I DWELT WITH SORROW LONG

I DWELT with sorrow long . . .
But when bright April came
With feet of flame,
I said:
"Heart, joy is not forever dead!"
(Again I heard the nesting robin's song.)

## JOY SINGS IN MY HEART

JOY sings in my heart like a wild bird
At dawn of Spring,
And the light of the sun leaps 'from stream to plain
On golden wing.

Twitter! twitter! sweet, O withering sweet
April melody!
I am a reed that quivers with too much song
Blown from a blossomy lea.

Beauty lingers, a silvery tear
In the curvéd cup of a flower,—
So Joy, the song of my heart, trembles near
In this God's hour!

## WAS IT THE VOICE OF THE SPRING?

WAS it the voice of the Spring or the voice of
my love that called me
Out of the boughs of the birch-tree snowy with
moonbeams?

Ah, it was sweet like the chant of a bee seeking
honey,
Culling the nectar of dreams from a blossomy
bosom!

Was it the face of the Spring or the face of my
love that smiled on me,
Silvery pleading that swooned on the sea-scented
breeze?

Ah, she was fair as a daffodil, golden, shimmering,
Her throat like a calyx woven of wonderful star-
kisses!

Was it the Spring or my loved one that sang in
the midnight?
Whose were the lips that I touched dewy with tears?

## THIS LITTLE SELF

THIS little self that struggles thro' earth's space,
Passing from light to dark, from mist to clear,
Conscious of need, and seeking for God's grace,
Possessed of giant hopes and puny fear,
So arrogant with pride, so weak in pain,
A prey to sudden tears and strange delight,
Pursuing phantom loveliness in vain;
What am I,—but a star-fall in the night,
The passage of a gleaming stellar flame,
That soars its little hour and then expires,
Drowned by eternal dark from whence it came,
Sunk in a sea of its own frail desires,
Knowing not why it soared, or whither gone—
A shuddering ray against the poppied dawn!

## MOTHER

WHENEVER I look in her kind eyes
I think of the wide, still sky,
Where the breath of God like beauty lies,
And the clouds are sailing by.

Whenever her care-worn face I see,
Or feel her lips on mine,
I think of the tears she has shed for me,
Silently, without sign.

Whenever she holds me to her breast,
To still the aching pain,
My heart is lulled to a perfect rest
And—I am a child again!

## TO A GIRL PLAYING

BLITHE spirit of sea and air,
O marvellously fair!—
What Beauty of unearthly spheres,
What immemorial tears
Of vanished ages, fill my heart
When, like some rippling waters, start
Your sylvan notes,
Clearer than those of robins' throats,
Sweeter than wind across a sky,
Deeper than sea-song when a storm is nigh,
More vibrant than a crystal bell
Tolled softly in a scented dell?

O, are you Atthis come again,
Singing of longing and of pain?
Or are you Phryne from the sea
Shaped from a master's ecstasy?
Or yet Isolde whose love-breath
Was sudden rapturous death?
What strangeness of a vanished land
Dwells in your eyes, thrills from your hand,
When lo! I hear your silvery plaint,
Music that makes my spirit faint,
Beauty, like a woodland spell—
Melody unimaginable!

## APRIL

MAGICAL April!
Star-shod, shimmering April,
With tresses of moonlight,
You come to me quivering with beauty,
Your laughing lips and your bosom
Dripping with azure.
In the streams that are swiftly coursing,
In the woods with the violets springing,
In the blue-bird that sings in the willows,
In the winds that are soft and perfumed,
I hear the voice of you, April,
And the sound of your gentle footfall,
And your wild sweet laughter swelling
Over the rainbow meadows.

Magical, shining April!
Star-shod, whispering April,
Pour me your golden plunder,
And fill my heart with your rapture,
Until quickened beneath your kisses,
I may feel again the secret of my lost girlhood!

## I NEVER KNEW

I NEVER knew the hours could be so long,
I never knew the sky could be so gray,
I never knew the sea could lose its song—
Until you went away.

I never knew how dark could be the night,
I never knew how blossomless the May;
I never knew that beauty could take flight—
Until you went away.

I never knew that life could be so drear,
I never knew how purposeless the day,
I never knew, O Sweet, I need you near—
Until you went away!

## SONG OF THE WEARY TRAVELLER

I AM weary, I would rest
On the wide earth's swelling breast,
Nurtured by the quiet sod,
Where the fragrant dew has trod,
Soothed by all the winds that pass,
Hearing voices in the grass
Of the little insect things
Happier than the mightiest kings!

I am weary, I would sleep
In some quiet perfumed deep,
Where no human touch could bring
Tears to me or anything.
There I would forget to weep
And my silent cloister keep;
There I would the earth embrace,
Meeting Beauty face to face.

I am weary, I would go
Where the fields are white with snow,
Where the violets have lain
Far from human strife and pain,—
Far from longing and delight
Thro' the endless starry night;
There I would forget to weep,
And my silent cloister keep.

## HOPE

LOVE took the light,
And went away;
I walk in darkness
Day by day.

And yet I know,
Though it be far,
My path winds somewhere
To a star.

## MUTABILITY

MUST
The gold of this hair
Become dust,
And this white breast,
Soft like the nest
Of a dove,
Fade on air?
Must
These sweet finger-tips,
Made
For love,
And these rose lips,
Fade
To dust?
How could such beauty be
To perish utterly. . . .

## CHOICE

I SANG, "O, Love, set me free—
As a bird on the air
My heart would be,
Sailing afar where the skies are fair,
Thro' the endless years."

But when Love left,
And I walked alone,
I said bereft:
"Come back, my own,
*Give me my tears!*"

## ENIGMA

I LIE in your arms;
The night is cool,
And under the stars
Your face is calm.
Yet why do you seem
Stranger to me than any stranger?

Is it to you that I have given
My body as a shrine?
Is it upon this breast
That I have lain and moaned for love
Thro' the long numberless nights
Of my Youth?

I lie in your arms,
And under the stars
Your face is calm.
Even so
Shall it always be. . .
(For we shall always be strangers to each other.)

## WHEN I AM DEAD

WHEN I am dead,
Bury me with the one I love,
With my head
On his bosom, and my heart
On his heart;
Let green grasses spring above.
(Nevermore, Beloved, to part!)

When I am dead,
Bury me with the one I love,
Spirit-wed
In sweet trust,
Bone with bone and dust with dust,
Let green grasses spring above.
(Nevermore, Beloved, to part!)

## ELEGY

I GROPE in the dark,
And there is no hand;
I seek,
And there is no light.
I walk alone
Amongst the silences;
They are like white lilies
Topping a grave,
And the grave is my heart,
Desolate as a tomb.

## LESS PALE THE ALMOND BUD

LESS pale the almond bud
  Upon a bough;
Less pure and new-born moon
  Than is her brow.

More amber dwells within
  Her tangled hair
Than any sunset glow,
  Divinely fair.

As delicate as winds
  That skim the sky,
In sudden Springtime showers,
  Her gentle sigh.

O fair and flower-sweet
  Her tender glance;
Her voice is softer than
  The starbeam dance.

## BY THE SEA

HERE peace and beauty reign,
Here by the sea;
Here I am whole again,
Of pain set free!
Flung to the dappled sky
All old desire,
Cleansed in the sun-fire
That which was I;
Each little nerve of me
Strung sweet anew,
Each weary sense of me
Soothed by the blue;
No more the ache of things
No more the sigh;
*Hark! has my soul spread wings*
*Into the sky?*

## MAY NIGHT

NIGHT! cool, enveloping, delicious,
Perfumed magical night of spring—
Fold your arms about my lover and me,
That we may hide in your sheltering darkness!

Night, radiant with many stars,
Sky, mother of pearl and azure,
Let your silence descend on my lover and me,
That we may dwell in sylvan quiet.

Night, fragrant with new grass and lilac,
Pool of endless shadows,
Bathe with joy my lover and me,
Till we swoon in the wreathéd wavelets!

Night, cool, enveloping, delicious,
O mother of love, mistress of beauty,
Give of your darkness wherein we would perish,
Drunken with dreams, my lover and me. . .

## CHANT OF LIFE

ONLY Love is real,
Life is a dream and I as a dream pass by.

My fellow-creatures
Are marionettes that swing thro' space;

Like gyrating figures
They pass in a pageant of myriad color;

Even as I, too, pass
Moved by the unseen strings that shift the scene.

And I know not why
There is all this weeping and laughter upon earth.

All things are but shadow,
Life is a dream and I as a dream pass by.

Only Love is real,
Only the face of Love as it lies on my heart.

## BEAUTY LIKE A BIRD

BEAUTY like a bird
Filled my lonely heart;
Oh, the music stirred!
Oh, the lyric-start!

All the tremulous air
Sweet with pollen-scent,
Singing everywhere,
Glory, wonderment.

Oh, the light above,
Oh, the blossoming;
*Is it sudden love—*
*Or the torch of Spring?*

## YOU TOOK WITH YOU THE SPRING

THE sun's smile is no longer gay,
The budding earth has ceased to sing,
For when you left me yesterday
You took with you the Spring.

I feel no more the wonder-thrill
Of wind or flower blossoming;
The world is hushed, my heart is still—
You took with you the Spring.

Oh, all things beautiful are sad,
And all things sweet have taken wing;
My heart will nevermore be glad;
You took with you the Spring!

## I THOUGHT LOVE DEAD

I THOUGHT Love dead,
And saw him borne away,
One April day,
Unto a quiet mound,
And lying by his side I wound
A garland of white roses fair
In his hair,
And lilies sweet
For peace, I placed about his feet,
An ivy chaplet for his head;
I thought Love dead.

I thought Love dead,
And sang his requiem in tears
For many years.
All knew my pain and said:
"Yea. Love is dead!"

I thought Love dead;
One night I sought his lonely bier,
There were strange wind-songs near,
And in the soft moonrise
I seemed to see the flicker of his eyes—
A gleam from shadowland. . . .
And when I touched him with my hand
I heard him speak;
(O God, still warm his cheek!)
An ivy chaplet for his head—
I thought Love dead. . . .

## NO MORE

NO more to hear his footstep on the stair,
And see the grace
Of his exquisite face;
No more to kiss his hair,
Bright like the sun;
No more to hear him speak,
Or touch the softness of his cheek,
Sweeter than any flower;
To know the dream is done,
And, hour by hour,
Await his footstep at my door
That comes—no more.

No more to call his blesséd name
When I awake,
And feel the morn grow fairer for his sake;
No more to claim
His little, gentle childlike ways
That gladdened all my days,
Or in the tired twilight glow
To seek his side and tell my pain;
Always to weep alone again,
O God, can it be so
The beauty that we knew of yore
To come—no more. . . .

## MOURN NOT FOR ME

MOURN not for me when I am gone away,
Nor shed sad tears that I should be alone
Beneath the grasses where the flowers are grown,
Where all is silence and there is no day;
Do not lament me, or with sorrow say:
"Now she is gone, oh, greatly must we weep."
For wrapped in my interminable sleep
There will be no sharp, quivering breeze of May,
Or blossom-stir, or sight of things too fair,
(A twilit pluméd red-bird on the wing)
To trouble my long tranquil slumbering;
Yea, I shall be at rest who had to bear
Beauty too keen and pain that had no end;
Earth will have taken me again to friend.

## SO QUIETLY LOVE CAME

SO quietly love came,
I did not hear his name
Thro' the night;
Only silence fell,
Like a starry spell
Of light. . . .

There was no caroling
Of bird or trumpet-flare;
Only on the air
The sudden burst of Spring,
And in my heart a flame,
(So quietly love came!)

## THEREFORE

MY new love came to me and said:
"What tears are these you shed
At dawn and eventide?
For lo! I bring you beauty,
To take you for my bride."

I kissed my new love as I said:
"Oh, I am thine to keep,
Altho' my first love is not dead,
And therefore I must weep."

## CREDO

OH, greater than God!
Oh, deeper than all wisdom!
Oh, sharper than the sting of death!
Oh, more boundless than earth
Or the many stars,
This love that fills my heart.

Oh ,miracle of the divine!
Oh, mystery of all mysteries!
Oh, strange flight of the spirit!
Oh, beauty illimitable
As the wide sky—
This love that fills my heart.

(Earth is a rainbow,
And my heart is young with wonder,
Since Love has come.)

## NOCTURNE

I LIE alone under the boughs of the trees;
They drip clear water,
And the rain dances about me
In bright flashes like little stars.
The trees are thick and lowering;
The night is very black
And there is no wind;
Only the darkness that shuts out the wide, cool sky.

There is fear at my heart,
Fear that closes about me like the night,
Fear that comes in little quick flashes
Like the drops of rain.

Is it of the wide still night
That I am fearful. . . .
(O dark, starless and full of silence!)

I tremble because of love that is my heart,
Love deeper than the still night,
More wonderful than the cool sky—
Love, whose too great beauty
Has made me afraid. . . .

## APHRODITE

FOR three years you loved me;
When you took me I was Aphrodite
Fresh from the foam
And wonder of Youth awakening.

For you the beauty of my natal hour;
My kisses were your food;
I watched you grow golden
With the manna of my love!

Now from my body all the lustre,
All the splendor of the sea
And the freshness of youth awakening,
Have vanished forever.

For three years you loved me;
Now I am no more Venus rising from the sea;
I am a Parian marble, white and silent,
Awaiting your worship.

## ASHES

SO it has all ended in ashes—
This beautiful love of ours,
This love like the breath of dawn
On a summer lea—
This love that lit our hearts
With wonder.

Why could it not have been otherwise?
As a star that falls thro' space,
Silvery-wingèd and swift,
So I would that our love had died
Exquisite in its flight
Through the dark.

But all this weeping and anguish
That sweeps thro' our aching hearts
Is useless as bitter flame;
And the holy fane of love—
The miracle of our joy—
Is but ashes and empty tears.

## REQUIESCAT

'TWAS here I walked with you. But you are dead. . . .
(I wonder if the roses on your grave can still be red.)

This lonely lane once flowered with your smile. . . .
(I wonder if the stars have made for you a shining bed.)

I held your hand Belovéd, all the while. . . .
(I wonder why I still recall the tender words you said.)

'Twas here I walked with you. But you are dead. . . .
(I wonder if the hair is golden yet about your head.)

## IMPRISONED

LOVE, with a silken cord
  My heart enwound;
Joy was my spirit's lord
  And singing sound.

After a little space
  My heart, in pain,
Wept, for in love's soft place
  Was forged a chain!

## YOU WHOM I NO LONGER LOVE

WHY am I wakeful thinking of you in the night,
You whom I no longer love,
You who love me no more?
Yet if you would turn the handle of my door
And stand before me white,
Like a young dove,
For just a little while
I think I would look up and smile.

What are these thoughts of you that strangle me
In this silent midnight hour?
Memories, dreams that cloud my eyes
And with strange torture rise,
Mocking my misery.
Somehow I wonder if the flower
Of old-time joy would burst to flame
If, dear, you came.

Yea, if you stood beside me in the night,
You whom I no longer love,
You who love me no more,
I would give you my hands as before,
And tremble with delight.
No thought would I have of
The years our hearts were dumb,
If you should come.

(*And at this moment you are wakeful, too,*
*Thinking of me, as I, of you.*)

## TWILIGHT

ONE pale star gleaming in the amber sky,
Day's death; a thousand butterflies that soar
Into the languid ether; the downpour
Of flickering golden lights that dance and die.

Your head upon my bosom; still we lie
In the red-tingéd shadows of the wheat,
And all about the little singing feet
Of birds and crickets as they flutter by.

Love is beauty. Oh, lift your frail arms high
That I may see the glory of your face,
And in the darkness hear the quiet peace
Of God who lingers like a brother, nigh.

## A DAUGHTER TO HER MOTHER

YOU will forgive me in the coming years,
When we no longer wander hand in hand,
And I have passed into a silent land
Beyond recalling,—yea, beyond your tears;
You will remember me as a wind that veers,
And brought the April sunshine and the storm,
And while you sit alone watching the warm
Spring break, you will forget these pains and fears,
And think of me as one who loved too well,
Who drank too deep of life, and thirsted much
For beauty, and who suffered for the touch
Of loveliness remote, intangible;
And you shall say, as every Spring shall dawn:
"I have forgiven her now that she is gone. . . "

## RESURGAM

WHEN there shall sound across the quiet sky
And sea,
Like sunlight bursting into flower,
My ultimate hour,
I have but one desire above
All things: that you should think of me,
Remembering our old love.

Having seen
A vanished beauty flush the sky,
Then I could die
Serene.

## WHEN LIFE IS DONE

WHEN life is done,
And weeping over,
And the last rays of the sun
My body cover,
When the wind is still
And bird songs no more fill
The silvery air,
Will you be waiting there
On yonder hill,
O my lost lover,
When life is done
And weeping over?

When the stars are gone,
And the moonbeams fail,
When the dying dawn
Flickers pale,
And the wide sea
Has taken me
From time and care,
Will you be waiting there,
Tenderly,
In some still vale,
When the stars are gone
And the moonbeams fail?

## SHADOW

I CAN love only you,
And since you can never be mine
Therefore I must love a shadow.

O Shadow, lovely as dawnrise,
Like a wind of summer are you to my soul,
Soft wind amid the skies.

Forever must I love only a shadow
Impalpable, exquisite thing,
Diaphanous as a rainbow wing.

(But when the long dark nights are here,
It is your lips I need, and I would rest
On the white violet of your breast.)

## METEMPSYCHOSIS

I KNOW that we shall meet again,
I know not where or how;
The beauty and the joy and pain
Cannot be ended now.

I know that you will come to me,
I know not when or why,
And all that we have dreamed shall be
A dream that will not die.

## AFTER LOVE

SWEET it is to meet again,
Now that love is past,
We are free of joy and pain
At last.

Sweet it is to touch your hair,
Now we love no more,
All the longing and despair
Gone before.

Sweet it is to feel you near,
Now that love is dead,
All the anguish and the fear
Finally fled.

Sweet it is to know that we
Now have reached the land,
After years on Love's wide sea,
Hand in hand!

## RENOUNCEMENT

GO from me. Hide such perfect loveliness
Afar beyond the tread of mortal feet;
I want not the soft touch of lips that meet
Above love's bier. I want not your caress,
Nor the white violet of your nakedness;
I want not love as others love; instead
Grant me the vision of your beauty fled,
The nocturne image of your youth. Ah, less
Than other lovers' is my need, yet more
For the heart's keeping; there I sweet enclose
The memoried fragrance of the blossoming rose,
And with a reverential joy explore
Each sacred nook of sense and spirit. Dear,
Go from me that the dream may bring you near!

## TEACH ME TO SUFFER

TEACH me to suffer, that I may not weep,
But silently to bear my pain alone,
To all but my own secret self unknown;
So I may go into the world and keep
Hidden within my heart its sorrow deep,
As fathomless seas enfold their marvellous store
Of coral, pearl and flowers, treasures more
Than man could conjure or his hands could reap.
Oh, let this trial be like some silent thing
That makes my spirit richer with the years,
So I may learn to suffer without tears
And go my way on earth unmurmuring;
Then shall I find in Grief the perfect goal,
The beauty that shall compensate my soul!

# PAGEANTS

## PAGEANTS

I NEVER see soldiers marching to music,
But I hear the sickening din of the battle,
And I think of the grim stark terrors of warfare.
I never see children play in the sunlight,
But I think of how much they will have to suffer
For they know not what is awaiting them in the future.
I never see lovers sitting together happy,
But I think of the anguish that comes with loving—
The waiting, the fear, the hope, the longing, the heartache.
I never see youth walking before me radiant,
But I picture the hour when the smile and the light will have faded,
When the strength and the glow of the body will have passed into nothingness.

I never see the city flaming with banners
Flaunting its color and movement and magic—
Its marvellous splendour awful, tumultuous,

But it seems like a puppet-show, lurid and gaudy,
And I think of the spaces of still country meadows,
Where birds are soaring into the ether,
And beauty is more real than a shadow, and God is far more than a name is!
I never see April spreading her nimbus of azure
O'er mountain and valley and quickening the earth with her glory,
But I think of the autumn and winds that are chilling and fearless
And of snows that come bruising the faces of flowers.

It is strange none who pass in the bright-colored pageant
Called Life are in any way fearful;
And not one is afraid; not the soldier who walks to the bugle,
Not the child as he laughs and plays in the sunlight,
Not the lover awaiting his sweetheart's caresses,
Not the youth who is facing the future undaunted,
Not the dweller of cities barbaric and splendid,
Not the flowers of April that crimson the meadows,
For none know as I know who stand watching it pass me—
Life the great spectacle, piteous, ruthless.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

WOMEN have doffed their tinselled gowns and stand
Huddled together idly in the wings,
Their weary eyes sad with unuttered things.
Somewhere in solemn tones a tenor sings,
His voice reverberant thro' the painted land.
Tawdry and dull the scenery hangs in lines,
Meadows and brooks and clustered grotesque flowers,
Castles and thrones and walls and colored bowers,
Dangling in creases where the spotlight shines.
Aloft is a labyrinth of winding stairs
Thro' lonely halls unlit and serpentine,
To the dressing rooms, where powdered girls on chairs
Await their turn or indolently lean
Half-naked at their mirrors of rough board.
The lights are feverish, and behind each scene,
Within dark pits of shadow, chests are stored,
Odd bits of property piled here and there
Beneath the iron girders bleak and bare.

Beyond, the house looms like a clouded sea
Immovable and hushed to the round dome,
Watching the scene with its bright pageantry,
While in the eaves the men and women roam
Aimless and tired in their great wilderness

Of silent shapes and shadows. Flown the mirth
And glittering beauty; garish in undress,
The stage is desolate, a shoddy earth—
Merely place of dreary emptiness.

The curtain drops. . . . A blinding rush of light,
Hundreds of hurrying figures black and white—
A rush of footsteps—then the sudden fall
Of interminable darkness over all.

## IN A CAFÉ

I GAZE on the people about me,
The crowd of many faces,
And suddenly I become detached,
I stand apart,
Watching the mimic masquerade of life;
I hear laughter,
I see grimaces of joy,
And I wonder silently
Which one is himself, naked and unashamed,
Which one dares the despair of beauty,
Which one is other than an actor in a puppet-show?
And a longing comes to me for something sublime—
Some stellar flight of loveliness,
Some impassioned utterance,
A lover who perished on the bosom of his sweetheart—
Some sudden swing of the pendulum
That shall shatter this hollow carnival!

I gaze on the faces of the people about me
And I know that all is unreal—
All is mist and skimming shadow,
Passing, passing into nothingness.
Sometime it must end
This hollow carnival. . . .
And I stand awaiting the great hour
When they will have to doff their masks. . . .

## THE DANCER

I DANCE to forget life,
For I have had enough of love and roses,
And I would feel the blood riot in my veins
Warm as a Summer wind!

Bring the music!
Let us dance till our dreams lie dead,
And the haggard dawn shivers
On the shining floor!

Let there be wild song
And false mirth to fill the heavy air;
As careless boys in carnival
Let us be glad!

Let me be full of rhythm
Until I am drunk unto forgetting!
Unfurl the pageant of color
That I may drown therein.

I dance to forget life,
For I have had enough of love and roses,
And in a blind reel
I would take Death by the hand.

## IN THE DEPOT

WOMEN—passing and repassing,
Tired women and sad women and smiling women,
Hurrying with heavy bundles,
Their footsteps tap, tap, tap on the stone floor.
Young women with light firm tread,
Painted women with amorous mouths,
Strutting with breasts thrown forward like arrogant pigeons;
Women conscious of their sex and the desire of men's eyes;
Women fresh, buoyant, hopeful, laughing,
Women thinking of the caresses awaiting them as they go to meet their lovers;
Pale, wan women with anxious faces,
Women who drag their legs wearily after the long days' work,
Vacant-eyed, staring women;
Women with bright crackling gowns and spreading hips;
Old women with wrinkled cheeks and hollow bosoms;
Women with dishevelled hair and pendulous abdomens;
Women who walk aimlessly seeming not to know where they are going;

Startled women, prim women, and vain, beautiful self-satisfied women;
Lank women and soft women, flushed and dimpled;
Sallow women and stout women breathing heavily—
Women hurrying, hurrying,
Their footsteps like the tap, tap of water from a tankard.

*These are the women men have worshipped,*
*These are the women who suffer that a little child may grow!*

## LITANY

GIVE me my utmost hour and let me die!
Even as the golden bee in the azure sky,
Even as the rainbow that glows and fades on high,
Even as the radiant star that dims with dawn,
Even as the rose that swoons on the languid breeze,
Even as the sunbeam paling, wan,
Lord, let me be as these!
(Give me my utmost hour and let me die!)

I am weary, weary of all discovered things,
Of the feast of love and delight with its painted wings,
Of the moon's slow gaze and the keen wind when it sings,
Of day in its august splendour of shining noon,
Of scented flowers and bird's glad threnodies—
Lord, I want none of these.
(I am weary, weary of all discovered things.)

Give me a rapture no mortal has ever known!
Some perfect joy that shall fill my heart alone,
Some beautiful vision from unseen regions blown,
Some sweetness beyond all bourne, some exquisite pain,
Some new mad riot of unborn ecstasies,
Some dream that is wild and vain,
Lord, why not one of these?
(Give me a rapture no mortal has ever known!)

## ADONIS

LYING in wounded rapture at my feet,
Adonis, like a slender limbéd fawn,
Sang in a dying loveliness so sweet
He fainted in the dawn. . . .

Slain in a tempest of the soul. Who knows
But his inanimate body cold and white
Stirs me to wonder, as some moon-drenched rose
Upon a summer night.

Oh, I shall take him now to be my own,
Our bridal-couch the damp worm-cankered sod,
And my fond kisses shall be only known
To God.

## SEEKERS

WE are very lonely,
We seekers after Beauty.
For we walk strange paths of silence. . .

We go where none have trodden,
Thirsting and alone—
Dizzy under the stars.

What will appease our dreams?
And what assuage our need
Of loveliness?

Immaculate Beauty!
Why must we suffer
To attain your kingdom?

We are very lonely,
We seekers after Beauty,
For there is the thirst of ages in our souls. . . .

## BACCHANTE

I AM inebriate with the sunlight's golden wine,
And I would love with an insensate fury!

Let me drain beauty even unto death!
Bring me a languid woman, perfumed, young,
Her dusky body hung with dazzling gems
And strange, exotic iridescent stuffs—
Her wanton eyes like thirsty summer moons.

Oh, I would love with an insensate fury!
Bring me a pale flower-boy,
White-limbed like a young heifer in a field,
His lips a-quiver with unknown desire. . . .
His soft throat virgin beneath my kiss,
His bosom like a bower of stars.

I would dance like a drunken fawn amid the wood,
Enraptured with the budding pollen-scents!

## I PITY ALL PEOPLE

I PITY all people who walk the earth—
Weary-eyed women,
Little pale children, too weak to play,
And strange men, with tired faces
Who follow the winding paths of life.
I pity all creatures who have ever been born
For not one is without some hidden sorrow.

Only when men come to die I do not weep,
For then they have no need of my pity.

## O VITA! O MORS!

THE dark pit of life,
The dark pit of death—
I stand between;
And I cannot chose.

O Life, I fear you,
Mistress of sorrow;
O Death, I fear you,
Mistress of sleep.

I stand amidst
The yawning darkness;
Which is the lesser pain:
O Life, O Death?

## AMERICA, TO ARMS!

SHE stands a guardian of the endless sea,
Her garb is golden and her lips are flame;
She is the portal of eternity
And Beauty is the realm from which she came.
She is the voice of many bleeding lands.
America, she calls! To arms, arise,
For like a glimmering sabre in the skies
In scarlet glow she stands
A guardian of the earth and sea—
Liberty!

## SPRING IN WARTIME

THE earth is bright with splendour,
The winter winds are fled,
The winter snow is racing
Swift down the river bed;
The willow-buds are breaking,
The blue-bird whistles clear,
New green is on the hillside,
And Beauty trembles near.
. . . . *O Spring, why all your glory,*
*In shining pageant spread*
*When I hear the wounded moaning*
*And the fields are dyed with red* . . . .

The crocus-flowers are springing
And golden in the sun;
The trees are hung with blossom,
And swift the streamlets run;
The love-note of the cuckoo
Floats on the quiet air;
The sky is like an opal,
So luminous and fair.
. . . . *O Spring, why all this glory,*
*In shining pageant spread*
*When I hear the wounded moaning*
*And the fields are dyed with red* . . . .

## SOLDIER'S PRAYER TO BEAUTY

BEAUTY, let me not forget you
In the white heat
Of war!
Let me remember the hour I met you,
When your silvery feet
Trembled from afar;
So in the tumult and woe
Your glorious presence my soul may know.

In the clash and strife
Give me Beauty's face
O Life,
Fair as a star
On a chartless sea,
When I go forth in the rocket's glare,
The cannon's roar and din,
When I stand in the shattered air—
Give me your light within;
On the fields of blood before me,
Your spirit shining o'er me.

Beauty, give me your face at the last,
Your face like a brilliant flower,
In the awful hour
When Death comes past;
Thus shall I do my part,
Calm in the shrapnel shower,
Beauty, if you desert not my heart!

## CONSCRIPTION: THE MOTHER SPEAKS

YOU ask me why I gave my son?
(As, well does God know why!)
That Prussian blood may swiftly run,
That tyranny may die.
That over earth all men may go
At freedom's call, and none may know
The Vandal's power within our land,
The Vandal's arrogant command!

You ask me why I gave my son?
(Ah well does God know why!)
I gave him that the treacherous Hun
Might well defeated lie.
I gave him that the coming race
Might meet with Justice, face to face,
And free men mingle over earth
In Liberty's divine re-birth!

## REVEILLE

TODAY my lover takes his gun
Across the meadows in the sun,
Across the scented fields of May,
I see him going on his way,
His swaying figure straight and strong
Thro' the long
Mile on mile against the sun.
Today my lover takes his gun!

Today my lover takes his gun,
(Ah well, Love's golden dream is done!)
For he is marching far away
Along the scented lanes of May,
His bayonet pointed toward the sky,
And grave his fearless eye,
Undaunted by the scorching sun.
(Today my lover takes his gun.)

## IN THE ARMORY

FACES that pass and pass,
Brave-eyed, fearless, resolute,
Features clear-cut like bronze
Against the glow of the glass-paned roof;
Feet that march, march, march
On the wide shining floor of the armory,
Smooth and bright and hard.
Rows and rows of staunch shoulders touching,
Their guns click, click, click
At the sergeant's call.
Round, round, round, turning, wheeling,
In long straight flanks they pass,
Marching, marching, marching,
Under the great wide dome in the fitful daylight,
And the gray tired city stretching on all sides.
Vast domain of young endeavor,
With its thousands of lads waiting, waiting,
Wide-armed clasping Beauty within its stronghold,
These are the noble faces, the perfect courage,
That show in manhood the true divinity!

## THE SOLDIER

HE died a soldier's death . . . I do not weep,
But stand in quiet wonder by his grave,
Remembering his last words: "I go to save
The women and the little children sweet,
So earth may be free pathways for their feet,
And their bruised bodies may be healed by brave
Men dying." Chant the bugle full and deep!
He died a soldier's death. I do not weep,
But stand in quiet wonder by his grave. . . .

# LOVE SONGS

## LOVE SONGS

### I

I COULD go to some far island of the moon,
But never would I be lonely;
For have I not the thought of my belovéd,
My beloved with dove-soft eyes
And lips like a young rose?

Oh, fair is he whom I love,
Whiter than the sea-foam,
And his breast is softer than falling snow-flakes.

I could go to some far island of the moon,
But never could I be lonely,
For I have the thought of my belovéd,—
My belovéd with dove-soft eyes
And fairer than an April morning!

## II

IN a field of summer wheat,
Golden as the sheaves,
I saw you standing under the sky.

The birds ceased singing,
And the wind paused
Breathless with beauty.

The sun paled in the heavens,
And day swooned with delight
At so much loveliness.

Wind, sky, light, earth,
Reeled in blinding mist,
Shattered into nothingness.

Like a golden sun-bird
You stood, spirit of immortal beauty,
Naked amid the wheat-sheaves.

## III

THE world is an enchanted place,
My soul a fairy flower;
I look upon the heaven's face
Each shining hour.

Each passer is a morning star
Upon the brilliant way;
I know not what earth-longings are,
So bright the day.

My heart is hushed as with the spring,
I mourn no more or pine;
Beauty is lit in everything—
My love, my love is mine!

## IV

BECAUSE of you I am glad of the day,
Like a bird on lifted wing;
Because of you my heart holds May
And the hue of a new-born spring.

Because of you the sky takes light,
And earth has the face of a flower;
Because of you the ebon night
Is starred with rainbow-shower.

Because of you the wingéd sod
Glows with a beauty divine;
Because of you I have looked on God,—
He spoke since you were mine.

## V

HEAL me with your love,
Fold me in your heart;
Let me think not of
The long years apart.

Let me no more weep,
Lying on your breast;
Kiss my soul to sleep,
There it would find rest.

I shall no more go
Lonely on my way;
We shall only know
Love, each happy day.

Tears and sorrow over,
Eased the aching smart. . . .
Fold me, O my lover,
Ever in your heart!

## VI

YOU asked me yesterday what moment seemed
Most beautiful of all our love-hours sweet;
—Belovéd, it was when kneeling at your feet
One summer's eve, you looked at me and smiled,
While in your cherished face there softly gleamed
The tenderness of a mother for her child.

## VII

I SING with the wind,
I laugh with the sun,
I am the first star
When day is done.

I soar with the bird,
I pulse with the tree,
My soul is the cloud—
I love. . . . I am free!

## VIII

WE are in the mist where the poppies smile,
  Red-mouthed with delight,
And the billowy clouds float aloft
  Their sails of white.

We tread the fragrant, phantom lanes,
  Paved with dancing sheen,
And when your lips reach down for mine
  One star falls between!

## IX

I AM no more myself,
For love has made us indivisible.
I have become you—
(And Oh! the joy of this intermingling!)

As two stars that fall thro' space
Join their silvery pinions in the night,
So thro' the dark of life
Shot the shining arrow of our love.

I am liberated from self,
Self has merged in you;
I am not I, for I have become you;
(And Oh! the joy of this intermingling!)

## X

I AM no more lonely, now that I have known your love,
Now that your love lies safe in my heart;
I go my way in wonder,
Companioned by great beauty.
Everywhere there are silvery voices calling me,
And when I walk beneath the stars
I understand the speech of the wind-cool sky,
And when I mingle with many people
I am one with the secret of their souls.

Until you came I was ever lonely;
I knew only solitude over the earth,
In the forests or playing with little children,
In the dawn-hour or in the shadow—
I walked alone, wandering in exile,
Till the golden hour of glory and gladness,
When your love like a moon-ray filled my heart
And Beauty came forth with kisses of starlight.

## XI

I KNOW that you whom I love today
Will sometime pass out of my life,
And all this joy and laughter,
This love that lights my heart
Will be no more,
And I will be left lonely,
As all women.

I know that the glory of this dream
That came like the breath of spring,
All this bloom and beauty,
As of a thousand dawns,
This gladness of meeting lips,
And this great calm of the spirit,
Cannot last forever.

I know that some day I shall walk alone,
Looking with eyes that cannot weep
Upon the future desolate.

# APRIL IDYLS

## APRIL IDYLS

### I

WHEN I left you,
And April sprang in the meadows
Misty and golden,
Your face that leaned to mine,
Awaiting my kisses
With anguish piteous, pallid,
Looked like the white-browed Hermes,
Compassionate, wondering, tearless. . . .

## II

WE were walking by a swift river;
The willows were golden above us,
And the new green of the meadows
Was not greener than your strange eyes,
Full of flight
As a bird's spread wings over sunny valleys.

"Beloved," you said,
As we watched the sunset lights on the river,
"We are like two beings
Born of one womb."

In your eyes I saw my image
Mirrored like sudden fire. . . .

## III

YOU have gone from me,
And I go forth alone
Into the shadow,
Where there are no sounds,
Where there are no perfumes,
Where there are no colors,
Where is no magic,
Where there is only darkness and silence,
Like the deep, still waters of a bottomless lake.

## IV

I HAVE made for your face a nest of roses,
And hid you far
In the depths of my heart where the moon's white glow reposes,
Wreathed in a star.

I have made for your love a beautiful home of flowers,
And o'er you shed
The deathless murmur of birds in perfumed bowers,
Where our dreams lie dead.

## THE SILENT HOURS: VALE

(Requiescat, Aisne, 1917.)

"Nec sine to nec tecum vivere possum."—*Ovid.*

## THE SILENT HOURS: VALE

### I

WE are together in the Silent Hours,
When dusk has furled its banners and the night
Is tremulous on the hilltop in a white
Illimitable halo of moonflowers.
For when the curtain of the twilight lowers,
And the dull eves are barren of delight,
My spirit falls dreaming and takes sudden flight
Into the realm of Silence. . . . Sweet, 'tis ours,
This fathomless region of commingling soul;—
Unfearful we partake of beauty's wine
And quaff with joyous lips the mute divine
Watching the glory of the stars unroll.
Yea, in the Silent Hours you come to me,
I breathe your voice. . . I touch you wonderingly.

## II

THE moment of our Love most beautiful
Was when at dusk we stood beside a lake,
The sunset fires within the woods awake
Like scarlet flower-fangs. Our hearts were full
Of gentle peace; the forest hush was deep,
And night, jewel-poised within the sapphire sky
Made love a holy thing. . . . We felt the high
Exalting rapture that ambrosial sleep
Casts o'er the yielding spirit, and we heard
The immutable silence of the twilit hour,
Our hearts attuned to some invisible power
Commingling as the two wings of a bird.
Dark fell; we parted and I went my way;
I did not even touch your lips that day.

## III

SO long it is that I have sought your face
In many lands, in ever-changing guise,
Throughout the multitudinous past that lies
Stretching behind me like a desert space;
Yea, in strange forms of some pre-natal race
My soul has wandered, seeking for your soul
O'er starry seas, in wooded glen and knoll,
Begging of God a little gift of grace—
The music of your swiftly passing feet,
The solace of your voice, so long desired.
O lovely and beloved, my heart was tired
With the old quest, and when it leapt to meet
That first light-giving glimmer of your eyes,
It touched all beauty's ultimate dawn-rise!

## IV

SHOULD you not come an hour when I await,
And stark the hours should fall one after one,
Void of all beauty and unknown to sun,
I would take sorrow for my constant mate
Nor care if death came early. O, how great
Would be the empty longing of my heart,
Still warm from its late loving, happy part,
Yet fearful of the lonely future state.
Beloved, we stand for now incorporate,
But what of that still hour inevitable
When there shall sound the terrifying knell
Of parting? . . . . Life may keep me very late,
And you may go, and I shall pass alone
Like a gray leaf across a meadow blown.

## V

BELOVED, I sometimes wish that you had died
And passed into the calm of a green grave,
Where I could tend your spirit, a glad slave
Of perfect memories; and throughout the wide
Mist-clouded future I could rest beside
Your moss-embowered image, dreaming of when
In some far land our souls might meet again
Cast Heavenward by death's befriending tide!
But you are living, and you tread the same
Deflowered earth as I, although our ways
Are sundered, and I cannot even claim
Sufficient tears to call back those glad days
When first your love into my lone heart came,
And when your lips first fondly spoke my name!

## VI

IF I could take this love from out my heart
And go my way in silence and alone,
Unweeping, and to fear and joy unknown,
Forgetful of the world's bright-colored mart,
Passing amidst the human throng, apart,
Like one who walks with beauty in the night,
Remembering all the tears and vain delight,
The rapture and the pain that were my part—
Then I could watch again the swallows dart
Into the sky's blue dome unenvyingly,
Knowing I am at last as they are, free. . . .
And I would say: "Though all sweet dreams depart,
I shall be ever glad remembering,
As one in winter hears the voice of Spring."

## VII

I CANNOT live without you, dear. . . . I pace
The haunted pathways of my bitter life;
Each spot with your sweet memory is rife,
And in each hour I find your beauty's trace.
As a meteor soaring the aërial space,
So have you shed about me everywhere
The immemorial image of your fair
And radiant youth. . . . How can my heart erase
The recollection of your seraph face,
The luminance of a love illimitable?
For like the tumult and the thunder-knell
Of sonorous seas, your spirit's celestial grace
Swept o'er me, and I fell before its tide,
Humble and happy as one glorified.

## VIII

OH, I would kill you, that I might enjoy
Your beauty unmolested, and respire
Each perfect thing about you, till desire
Ceased from satiety. I would destroy
The sickly flame of life, so I could toy
With your sun-tingéd tresses at my will,
And quaff the rose-scent of your skin and fill
Each separate part of me with sweetness. Boy,
Thus shall delight of you without alloy
Wake in my heart; for when I kiss your face,
It shall not quiver in my fond embrace
Beset with oldtime images. Sweet and coy
Your faultless breast shall all its treasures give.
(*I love you dear, too much to let you live!*)

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: Oct. 2009

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